

ORIGINAL

24 / "Mayors"

ADDRESS

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PRESENTED TO THE MAYORS' AIDS TASK FORCE

U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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(GREETINGS TO HOSTS, GUESTS, FRIENDS, ETC.)

I'M PLEASED TO HAVE THE CHANCE TO SPEAK TO THIS GROUP OF KEY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF MONTHS, EVER SINCE I RELEASED THE SURGEON GENERAL'S REPORT ON AIDS, I'VE FELT THAT MY OFFICE -- OF ANY OFFICE I KNOW -- IS "WHERE THE ACTION IS."

BUT IN MY MORE SOBER MOMENTS, I HAVE TO ADMIT THAT EACH ONE OF YOU HAS THE "ACTION" IN OUR COUNTRY.

I CAN PRODUCE A REPORT ON AIDS AND HAVE IT BE A GOOD ONE -- AND I TRULY BELIEVE IT IS -- BUT THE PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY HAVE AIDS ARE IN YOUR CITIES...THEY'RE YOUR CONSTITUENTS...AND THEY LOOK TO YOU AND TO YOUR COLLEAGUES IN LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES FOR THE HELP THEY NEED.

I KNOW THAT. AND SO, I'M PLEASED TO TALK WITH YOU AND, IF POSSIBLE, OFFER YOU SOME INSIGHT INTO WHAT THIS PROBLEM IS ALL ABOUT.

FIRST OF ALL, AS YOU KNOW, OUR EXPERIENCE WITH AIDS IS ONLY SIX YEARS OLD. THE FIRST REPORTS OF THE DISEASE WERE SENT FROM SOME OF YOUR CITIES INTO OUR CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL IN ATLANTA IN JUNE 1981. YOU ALREADY KNOW THE REST OF THE HISTORY OF THE DISEASE SINCE THEN, SO I WON'T GO INTO IT.

I WANT TO EMPHASIZE, HOWEVER, THAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A DISEASE THAT'S SPREADING. THE NUMBER OF VICTIMS IS DOUBLING IN LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, AS OF JANUARY 1986, WE HAD A CUMULATIVE TOTAL OF 16,000 REPORTED CASES.

TODAY THAT CUMULATIVE TOTAL IS 30,000...AND OVER HALF OF THEM HAVE ALREADY DIED OF THE DISEASE. AND THE REST APPARENTLY WILL.

LAST YEAR WE HAD OVER 13,000 NEW CASES ADDED TO THE TOTAL. THIS YEAR WE EXPECT ANOTHER 23,000 NEW CASES.

BY THE END OF 1990 A QUARTER OF A MILLION PEOPLE WILL HAVE CONTRACTED AIDS.

MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT. AIDS IS SPREADING AMONG MORE PEOPLE... AND IT IS FATAL.

NOW, EVEN THOUGH SCIENTISTS HAVE HAD A LOOK AT THE AIDS VIRUS ITSELF, WE DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT IT IS. AND UNLESS WE KNOW THAT, WE HAVE NO WAY OF PERMANENTLY STOPPING IT. YES, WE'RE MAKING PROGRESS IN THE RESEARCH EFFORT, BUT IT'S VERY SLOW GOING.

PEOPLE ASK, "WHEN WILL WE HAVE AN EFFECTIVE VACCINE AVAILABLE?" AND I HAVE TO TELL THEM THAT I DON'T SEE ONE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. I WILL REMIND YOU THAT IT TOOK 19 YEARS TO DEVELOP THE HEPATITIS B VACCINE -- AND THAT WAS A COMPARATIVELY EASY VIRUS TO UNDERSTAND.

THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT AIDS. BUT WE DO KNOW WITH COMPLETE CERTAINTY THAT THE AIDS VIRUS IS TRANSMITTED FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER EITHER IN BLOOD OR IN SEMEN.

IT'S A PECULIAR TRAIT FOR A VIRUS, I'LL ADMIT. BUT THERE IT IS.

AND WHILE IT MAY BE PECULIAR, IT IS ALSO THE MOST SERIOUS PIECE OF INFORMATION WE HAVE. IT EXPLAINS, FOR EXAMPLE, WHY AIDS HAS BEEN SO PREVALENT AMONG HOMOSEXUAL AND BISEXUAL MEN. SOME HOMOSEXUAL SEX PRACTICES NOT ONLY PRODUCE SEMEN BUT THEY ALSO CAUSE SOME BLEEDING.

THE SECOND LARGEST GROUP OF AIDS CARRIERS ARE DRUG ABUSERS WHO BORROW DIRTY INTRAVENOUS NEEDLES FROM OTHER ADDICTS WHO ALREADY HAVE AIDS.

WHEN WE FIRST BEGAN TO CONFRONT THE AIDS EPIDEMIC, THE PEOPLE AT HIGHEST RISK WERE HOMOSEXUAL AND BISEXUAL MEN. I'M AFRAID THEY STILL ARE, EVEN THOUGH HOMOSEXUALS HAVE APPARENTLY BECOME MUCH MORE CAUTIOUS ABOUT THEIR SEXUAL PRACTICES. THIS IS CLEAR FROM THE DOWNWARD TRENDS LINES OF OTHER DISEASES, SUCH AS GONORRHEA, HERPES, AND SYPHILIS, IN THE GAY COMMUNITY.

HOWEVER, THE VIRUS HAS A LONG INCUBATION PERIOD AND MANY MEN WHO ARE MORE CAUTIOUS TODAY AND SHOW NO SIGNS OF THE DISEASE ARE NEVERTHELESS CARRYING THE VIRUS IN THEIR BLOODSTREAMS.

MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT THIS: HOMOSEXUAL AND BISEXUAL MEN ARE STILL THE PRIMARY HIGH-RISK GROUP AND THEY ARE ALSO THE PRIMARY GROUP TRANSMITTING THE DISEASE AS WELL.

BUT LATELY WE'VE BEEN SEEING A RISE IN THE REPORTS OF AIDS OCCURRING AMONG HETEROSEXUAL MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE NOT I.V. DRUG ABUSERS. IN FACT, THEIR HETEROSEXUAL ACTIVITY SEEMS TO BE THEIR ONLY RISK FACTOR.

AS OF LAST WEEK, ABOUT 4 PERCENT OF ALL AIDS REPORTS INVOLVED HETEROSEXUAL MEN AND WOMEN. THAT'S NOT MUCH. HOWEVER, WHILE WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE OVERALL NUMBERS OF AIDS CASES WILL INCREASE ABOUT 9-FOLD OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, THE NUMBER OF AIDS CASES INVOLVING HETEROSEXUALS WILL INCREASE ABOUT 20-FOLD.

SO FAR, WE'VE BEAMED VIRTUALLY ALL OUR INFORMATION AND EDUCATION EFFORTS AT HOMOSEXUAL AND BISEXUAL MEN. BUT NOW THAT THE DISEASE IS OCCURRING MORE AND MORE AMONG HETEROSEXUAL MEN AND WOMEN, WE NEED TO DIRECT OUR INFORMATION AND EDUCATION EFFORTS OUT TO THE WHOLE SOCIETY, WHICH, OF COURSE, IS PREDOMINANTLY HETEROSEXUAL.

THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT ALSO MEANS THAT THE GEOGRAPHY OF THIS DISEASE IS CHANGING. AT ONE TIME WE WERE CONCERNED PRIMARILY -- ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY -- WITH THE HOMOSEXUAL COMMUNITIES IN SAN FRANCISCO, LOS ANGELES, AND NEW YORK CITY. AND THESE ARE STILL THE CITIES WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBERS OF AIDS CASES.

BUT THEY'RE NO LONGER ALONE. OTHER CITIES AND STATES ARE SHOWING A RISE IN CASES, TOO.

YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD SOME OF THESE FIGURES ALREADY, BUT LET ME OFFER JUST A COUPLE:

HOUSTON HAD 77 CASES IN 1983, BUT IT REPORTED 345 LAST YEAR.

DALLAS HAD ONLY 26 AIDS CASES IN 1983; IT HAD 208 LAST YEAR.

ATLANTA HAD 25 IN 1983; IT HAD 185 LAST YEAR.

BOSTON HAD 38 IN 1983 AND 155 LAST YEAR.

NOW, FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOME PEOPLE HERE FROM STATE CAPITOLS, LET ME ADD THESE FIGURES:

COLORADO REPORTED 167 NEW CASES DURING 1986, BUT ONLY 63 NEW CASES IN 1985.

OHIO HAD 173 NEW ONES LAST YEAR, BUT ONLY 64 A YEAR AGO.

AND ARKANSAS HAD 40 NEW CASES LAST YEAR, BUT ONLY 27 IN ALL OF 1985.

THESE BROADLY GEOGRAPHIC TREND-LINES WERE ALREADY APPEARING, WHEN PRESIDENT REAGAN ASKED ME -- BACK IN FEBRUARY OF 1986 -- TO PULL TOGETHER EVERYTHING WE KNEW ABOUT AIDS AND PUT IT IN A PLAIN-ENGLISH REPORT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

I MET WITH INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS FROM ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF SOCIETY...

GROUPS LIKE THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL P.T.A....

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION AND THE SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA...

WITH THE NATIONAL COALITION OF BLACK AND LESBIAN GAYS AND THE WASHINGTON BUSINESS GROUP ON HEALTH.

I HAD GOOD MEETINGS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL, COUNTY, AND STATE AND TERRITORIAL HEALTH OFFICIALS, ALSO...26 GROUPS IN ALL.

THEY WERE EXTRAORDINARILY HELPFUL, AND EACH ONE PLEDGED TO DO WHATEVER WAS NECESSARY TO DISTRIBUTE MY REPORT ACROSS THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF AMERICA.

AFTER 8 MONTHS OF LISTENING AND WRITING, I DELIVERED MY REPORT TO THE WHITE HOUSE. LATE LAST SEPTEMBER THE CABINET HEARD IT AND ACCEPTED IT...THE DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL HEARD AND ACCEPTED IT...AND, OF COURSE, THE PRESIDENT ACCEPTED IT.

I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT AT NO TIME DID ANYONE SUGGEST A LITTLE CHANGE HERE AND A LITTLE SOMETHING THERE. I'M HAPPY TO SAY THAT THE FINAL PUBLISHED REPORT I RELEASED ON OCTOBER 22 WAS THE EXACT SAME REPORT THAT I PERSONALLY WROTE BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND SEPTEMBER OF LAST YEAR.

I THINK THE REPORT HAS DONE TWO THINGS: FIRST, IT HAS IMPRESSED THE COUNTRY GENERALLY THAT AIDS WAS INDEED EVERYBODY'S PROBLEM. WE HAD SAID THAT BEFORE, BUT NOBODY REALLY WANTED TO BELIEVE IT.

NOW THEY MUST.

SECOND, THE REPORT MAKES IT CLEAR THAT WE HAVE TO STOP THE DISEASE NOT BY WAITING AROUND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A VACCINE BUT BY TEACHING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE THE FACTS ABOUT AIDS AND -- HOPEFULLY -- THEREBY ENDING THE CHAIN OF TRANSMISSION ONCE AND FOR ALL WITH THE HELP OF A NEW GENERATION OF ENLIGHTENED, CAUTIOUS AMERICANS.

HETEROSEXUAL AS WELL AS HOMOSEXUAL YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOW AT HIGH RISK. HOW THEY LIVE OUT THEIR SEXUALITY OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME WILL DETERMINE WHETHER OUR SOCIETY CAN SURVIVE THIS DEVASTATING DISEASE...OR NOT.

AND THIS IS THE DIFFICULT PART. WHAT WE HAVE TO DO OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS IS EDUCATE AND INFORM YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT AIDS ABOUT THEIR OWN SEXUALITY IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY CAN BECOME A LITTLE MORE RESPONSIBLE THAN THEIR ELDERS HAVE BEEN.

I KNOW YOU'RE ALL WONDERING WHAT EDUCATIONAL MESSAGES YOU SHOULD PLAN IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITIES. I WON'T BE PRESCRIPTIVE, BUT LET ME OFFER A COUPLE OF SUGGESTIONS.

THE FIRST ONE IS SIMPLE ENOUGH: IT'S MONOGAMY. IN OTHER WORDS, SHORT OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE, THE BEST DEFENSE AGAINST AIDS IS TO MAINTAIN A FAITHFUL, MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIP, THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH YOU HAVE ONLY ONE CONTINUING SEXUAL PARTNER...AND THAT PERSON IS AS FAITHFUL AS YOU ARE.

THIS MAY SOUND LIKE A MORALITY LESSON, BUT IT ALSO HAPPENS TO BE GOOD SCIENCE. IN CONTAINING THE EPIDEMIC OF AIDS, SCIENCE AND MORALITY WALK HAND-IN-HAND TOWARD THE SAME GOAL.

MY SECOND MESSAGE IS FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T YET HAVE A FAITHFUL MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIP FOR WHATEVER REASON. MY MESSAGE IS... CAUTION. YOU NEED TO KNOW WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT NEITHER YOU NOR YOUR PARTNER IS CARRYING THE AIDS VIRUS. IF YOU ARE NOT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN, THEN YOU MUST TAKE PRECAUTIONS.

IN SUCH SITUATIONS I ADVISE THE FOLLOWING:

- * DON'T HAVE SEX WITH SOMEONE WHO ALREADY HAS AIDS. PERIOD.
- * DON'T HAVE SEX WITH SOMEONE WHO COULD CARRY THE VIRUS OF AIDS ...A PERSON WHO, FOR EXAMPLE, PRACTICES HIGH-RISK BEHAVIOR. THAT INCLUDES HOMOSEXUALS, INTRAVENOUS DRUG USERS, PROSTITUTES AND OTHER PERSONS WHO HAVE MANY DIFFERENT SEX PARTNERS. OBVIOUSLY THE SAME MESSAGE GOES TO ANY OF THOSE HIGH-RISK INDIVIDUALS.

* AND FINALLY, IF YOU DO DECIDE TO HAVE SEX WITH SUCH AN INDIVIDUAL ANYWAY -- A DECISION THAT COULD HAVE SERIOUS HEALTH CONSEQUENCES -- THEN, IF YOU'RE A MAN, AT LEAST USE A CONDOM FROM START TO FINISH. IF YOU'RE A WOMAN, MAKE SURE YOUR MALE PARTNER USES A CONDOM.

A CONDOM WON'T PROVIDE 100 PERCENT PROTECTION -- FEW THINGS IN LIFE DO -- BUT SO FAR IT SEEMS TO BE THE BEST PROTECTION SHORT OF MONOGAMY.

IF SEXUALLY ACTIVE PEOPLE WILL HEED THESE TWO MESSAGES, THEY WILL ACHIEVE A HIGH DEGREE OF PROTECTION AND WILL MOST LIKELY NOT BE INFECTED WITH THE AIDS VIRUS.

WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO TO COMBAT THIS TERRIBLE DISEASE?

IN MY REPORT ON AIDS, I ALSO ADVISE PEOPLE TO AVOID THOSE SEX PRACTICES WHICH CAN CAUSE CUTS OR TEARS IN THE LININGS OF THE RECTUM, VAGINA, OR PENIS.

I SAY, DON'T HAVE SEX WITH FEMALE OR MALE PROSTITUTES.

I STRONGLY ADVISE YOUNG PEOPLE TO STAY CLEAR OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL, BECAUSE THESE SUBSTANCES LOWER YOUR ABILITY TO THINK CLEARLY AND PROTECT YOURSELF FROM DANGER...ESPECIALLY THE DANGER OF HAVING SEX WITH AN AIDS-INFECTED PARTNER.

AND I ALSO SUGGEST THAT WE EDUCATE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT AIDS AND ABOUT SEXUALITY. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CURIOUS AND EAGER FOR SUCH KNOWLEDGE. THEY'RE STILL LEARNING ABOUT THEIR BODIES AND THEIR EMOTIONS...THEY'RE STILL UNSURE ABOUT THEIR OWN SEXUALITY... AND THEY STILL HAVE THAT PRICELESS OPTIMISM ABOUT THE WORLD AND THE PEOPLE IN IT.

I PREFER TO SPEAK ABOUT THE NEED FOR "AIDS EDUCATION." AND I TRULY BELIEVE WE NEED SUCH EDUCATION AT THE APPROPRIATE AGE LEVEL IN THE SCHOOLS OF AMERICA.

BUT I ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT, FOR MANY YOUNG PEOPLE, SUCH EDUCATION MAY BE FRIGHTENING...OR PUZZLING...OR BOTH.

HENCE, I BELIEVE THAT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ACTION OUR SOCIETY MIGHT TAKE TO PROTECT ITS YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THE MORTAL THREAT OF AIDS IS TO PROVIDE THEM WITH EDUCATION CONCERNING THEIR OWN SEXUALITY THAT IS FACTUALLY CORRECT, PERSONALLY SENSITIVE, AND MORALLY STRONG.

THE TERM "SEX EDUCATION" IS ONE I'M NOT AT ALL COMFORTABLE WITH BECAUSE IT IMMEDIATELY POLARIZES ANY AUDIENCE. ALSO, IN MY VIEW, "SEX EDUCATION" USUALLY MEANS A COURSE OF INSTRUCTION THAT IS MUCH TOO LIMITED. LET ME EXPLAIN WHAT I MEAN BY THAT.

MOST OF THE TIME, WHEN YOU HEAR THE PHRASE, "SEX EDUCATION," YOU THINK OF CLASS TIME DEVOTED TO HUMAN REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY, INCLUDING CAREFULLY PHRASED EXPLANATIONS ABOUT THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE MALE AND FEMALE GENITALIA.

I'M TOLD THAT YOUNG PEOPLE CALL THESE CLASSES "ORGAN RECITALS."

MOST SCHOOLS NOW OFFER THIS MINIMUM KIND OF SEX EDUCATION SOME TIME DURING THE JUNIOR HIGH OR MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS AND THAT'S A GOOD THING, ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE LATE. I PERSONALLY WOULD URGE THAT THE MATERIAL BE PRESENTED EARLIER, AMONG 9-, 10-, AND 11-YEAR-OLDS.

OF COURSE, DEVELOPMENTAL AGE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN CHRONOLOGICAL AGE. ALSO, COMMUNITY STANDARDS, WHICH VARY FROM PLACE TO PLACE, MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

GRADE-SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE EXTREMELY CURIOUS ABOUT THEMSELVES. THEY ARE ALSO KINDER AND MORE GENEROUS THAN OLDER CHILDREN...OR EVEN MOST ADULTS, FOR THAT MATTER. AND THEY ARE, ABOVE ALL, SUSCEPTIBLE TO BEING LOVED AND TO OFFERING MUCH LOVE IN RETURN.

AND SEX EDUCATION WITHOUT THE CONCEPT OF LOVE AND RESPONSIBILITY IS LIKE A PIECE OF PIE THAT'S ALL CRUST AND NO FILLING.

MY OWN PREFERENCE, THEREFORE, WOULD BE TO HAVE OUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS INTRODUCE CHILDREN TO THE SUBJECT OF REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY WITHIN A MORE GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE NATURE OF SENSITIVE AND AFFIRMATIVE HUMAN RELATIONS.

THAT'S EASIER TO SAY THAN TO DO, I KNOW. AND FURTHERMORE, SOME PARENTS GET UNEASY ABOUT HAVING THE SCHOOLS IMPART CERTAIN HUMAN VALUES TO THEIR CHILDREN. THEY THINK THAT SUCH INSTRUCTION SHOULD BE DONE AT HOME.

AND I AGREE. MY ADVICE TO PARENTS HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE SAME: THE SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR CHILDREN IS YOUR BUSINESS. DON'T PASS IT UP...DON'T PASS IT BY...PASS IT ON.

PARENTS AGREE WITH ME 100 PERCENT. BUT MOST OF THEM, I HAVE TO CONFESS, NEVER DO MUCH MORE THAN AGREE WITH ME. NEVERTHELESS, I ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO TALK OPENLY, CLEARLY, AND AFFIRMATIVELY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THEIR DEVELOPING PHYSIOLOGY. BUT I WANT THEM TO GIVE SOME OTHER INFORMATION, TOO

AS I INDICATED EARLIER, "SEX EDUCATION" MEANS MORE TO ME THAN JUST AN "ORGAN RECITAL." "SEX EDUCATION" OUGHT TO DEAL WITH RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN THAT ARE LOVING, CARING, RESPECTFUL, AND TOLERANT.

SUCH RELATIONSHIPS INCLUDE SOME FULFILLING SEXUAL ACTIVITY, BUT THEY ARE NOT DEFINED ONLY BY THAT ACTIVITY. THERE'S MUCH MORE TO HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS THAN JUST "GOOD SEX." AND YOUNG PEOPLE OUGHT TO BE ADVISED OF THAT.

BUT FOR MANY PEOPLE, SUCH A BALANCED RELATIONSHIP IS AN IDEAL.
"REAL LIFE" ISN'T ALWAYS LIKE THAT.

GROWN-UPS KNOW ABOUT HUMAN IMPERFECTION. BUT CHILDREN DON'T.

AND GROWN-UPS CAN DEAL WITH HUMAN IMPERFECTION. BUT CHILDREN
CAN'T...UNLESS WE HELP THEM.

WITHOUT A COMPASSIONATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPERFECT NATURE OF
MANY HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, A CHILD'S EDUCATION WILL BE...ITSELF...VERY
IMPERFECT.

SO IF PARENTS ARE TO EDUCATE THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT HUMAN RELATION-
SHIPS -- SEXUAL AND OTHERWISE -- THEY MUST FIRST UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT
THE NATURE OF THEIR OWN. FOR MANY OF US, THAT'S HARD TO DO.

AND THEN THEY MUST BE ABLE TO TELL THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT THAT RELATIONSHIP. I'D LIKE PARENTS TO DO THIS WITH COMPASSION, WITH RESPECT AND LOVE, AND WITH SOME UNDERSTANDING NOT JUST OF THE CHILD WHO IS LISTENING...BUT ALSO OF THE ADULT WHO IS SPEAKING. AND THAT'S EVEN HARDER TO DO.

I'M SHARING THESE THOUGHTS WITH YOU TODAY BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT MY DEEPEST WISH IS STILL FOR THE PARENTS OF THIS COUNTRY TO BE THE PRIMARY TEACHERS OF SEX AND HUMAN RELATIONS TO THEIR CHILDREN.

AND I SAY THAT, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT THIS MAY BE AN ASSIGNMENT THAT SOME PARENTS SIMPLY CAN'T HANDLE. WHEN THAT'S THE CASE, THEN I BELIEVE THERE IS A COMPELLING SOCIAL NEED FOR OUR SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, SYNAGOGUES, AND OTHER COMMUNAL INSTITUTIONS -- INCLUDING OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS -- TO DO WHATEVER THEY CAN TO PROVIDE OUR CHILDREN WITH THE MOST HELPFUL KINDS OF INFORMATION.

OUR CHILDREN DON'T LIVE IN A VACUUM, AS WE ALL KNOW. THEY LIVE IN A REAL WORLD OF PLEASURE AND DANGER, ALONG WITH THE REST OF US. BUT WE HAVE SOME EXPERIENCE WITH IT AND SOME SENSE OF HOW TO SURVIVE IN IT...WITH OUR LIVES AND OUR VALUES INTACT.

AND I BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT EACH OF US -- IN OUR HOMES OR IN OUR SCHOOLS -- HAS THE MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO PASS THAT INFORMATION ON TO OUR CHILDREN. WE CAN'T LEAVE IT BY DEFAULT TO THE MOVIES, TELEVISION, OR THE STREET-CORNER.

NOT IF YOU VALUE THE YOUNG LIVES THAT ARE NOW AT STAKE.

THIS HAS BEEN A GRIM MESSAGE AND I GUESS I AM A GRIM COURIER. I ONLY HOPE THAT EVERYONE WHO HEARS IT OR READS IT WILL ALSO BELIEVE IT AND DO HIS OR HER PART TO STOP THE SPREAD OF AIDS...PROTECT AND SAVE THE LIVES OF PEOPLE AT RISK, INCLUDING UNSUSPECTING YOUNG PEOPLE...AND RETURN HUMAN SEXUALITY BACK TO ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE: PART OF THE TOTAL COMPLEX OF HUMAN, CARING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS.

THANK YOU.

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